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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0549**

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REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

September 27, 2007

Mr. Corey Gruber, Acting Deputy Administrator  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security/FEMA  
5th Fl. Techworld Bldg.  
500 C St SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Mr. Gruber:

Please accept this letter of support for the City of Vista, California's recent application for funding assistance under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program for Fiscal Year 2007 (CDFA 97.083).


The City of Vista is requesting \$1.58 million to help fund the hiring of 15 new firefighters in one of two newly approved fire stations. Vista's application responds directly to the stated intent of the SAFER program: to enhance local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Recently, the citizens of Vista passed a local Public Safety Sales Tax measure that will fund \$5.9 million for the construction of two additional fire stations. Funding through the SAFER grant program will allow the City to hire 15 new firefighters to reside in one of new stations located in the downtown area. Currently this area of the City has the worst fire response time compliance as measured by the federal NFPA 1710 benchmark.

The need for this funding is clear. The Vista Fire Department protects 38 square miles and a population of more than 113,000 residents in north San Diego County, an area not immune to wildfires of the kind California is seeing more frequently. The NFPA recommends staffing at 1.6 firefighters per 1,000 residents. Vista's current ratio is .58 firefighters per 1,000 residents. This is almost two-thirds below a key SAFER benchmark. With one of the lowest ratios in the region, this leaves the Vista community and its firefighters at greater risk.

I urge you to give the City of Vista's grant request full consideration. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Legislative Assistant, Veronica Smith, at (202) 225-3906. Thank you in advance for your time on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darrell Issa', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darrell Issa  
Member of Congress

Cc: City of Vista, California